

# Selecting an Onboarding Sponsor

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Transitioning into a new job can be stressful. A way to smooth this transition is to assign a peer or colleague to act as an onboarding sponsor for the new employee. The hiring manager should select the onboarding sponsor to partner with the new employee during their first months of employment. The time commitment will be greater early in the new employee's tenure. Consider adjusting workload and expectations for the onboarding sponsor during the initial phase of the sponsor assignment.

## Selection Criteria

Consider the following criteria when selecting an onboarding sponsor:

- ☐ Employed more than one year
- ☐ Is a peer of the new employee?
- ☐ Works in the same department and/or has a similar role
- ☐ Demonstrates strong performance on the job
- ☐ Exemplifies the department's mission and vision
- ☐ Can devote time to be accessible to the new employee
- ☐ Takes pride in the organization
- ☐ Well connected to department staff
- ☐ Demonstrates patience, good communication, and interpersonal skills
- ☐ Shows interest in being an onboarding sponsor
- ☐ Is a positive role model (well-regarded and accepted by current employees)
- ☐ Is clear of any personnel issues/actions
- ☐ Understands the onboarding sponsor role and potential responsibilities (See "Onboarding Sponsor's Roles and Responsibilities")

The onboarding sponsor should be a superior performer with strong people skills. The ideal candidate knows the ropes and, more importantly, knows what actions to take to be successful in achieving the department mission. The onboarding sponsor is a source of advice and encouragement that can succeed in steering new employees in the right direction, as well as helps to create and maintain a positive and productive culture of excellence.

Part of this role is to create a comfortable, more informal environment in which the employee can ask and receive information about the department's culture and norms, including those everyday (mostly unwritten) procedures and policies that help to explain how things really work.

Finally, a major goal of the onboarding sponsor is to establish a sense of belonging for the new employee. With an effective onboarding sponsor, each new employee will quickly become a contributing member of their new department or agency.